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NSC BRIEFING

COMMUNIST CHINA

Certain changes noted recently in Chinese Communist propaganda point to the possibility of a purge in Peiping's leadership. We have tried to assess the present situation in China in the light of developments in the USSR since the death of Stalin.

There doesn't seem to have been any important change in the relationship between Communist China and the Soviet Union since Stalin's death. But a review of Peiping broadcasts since Beria's downfall in early July reveals a greatly increased Chinese Communist awareness of the Soviet emphasis on "collective leadership." This has been reflected in a noticeable decline in Peiping's praise of Mao Tse-tung's personal leadership.

Following Stalin's death, Soviet propaganda gradually developed a trend away from "worship of the individual." Although this line was clear before June, Peiping's eulogies of Mao reached an all-time high in June and early July. It was publicly asserted that China was entering a period of glory identified with Mao's personal rule, the "era of Mao Tse-tung."

As leader of the Chinese Communist Party, Mao has been unchallenged since at least 1938, and his position is believed to be secure. There are grounds for questioning the status, however, of several other members of the party's central committee. Some of these persons may be publicly purged in the alleged interests of party "unity."

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